

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD
UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT
 (acre)
CODE 645

DEFINITION

Creating, restoring, maintaining or enhancing areas for food, cover, and water for upland wildlife and species which use upland habitat for a portion of their life cycle.

PURPOSE

- Provide a variety of food for the desired kinds of wildlife species.
- Provide a variety of cover types for the desired wildlife species requirements, including nesting, loafing, resting, escape, travel lanes, and avoidance of threats.
- Provide drinking water for the desired kinds of wildlife species.
- Arrange habitat elements (vegetation, water) in proper amounts and locations to benefit desired species.
- Manage the wildlife habitat for animal and plant pests to achieve a viable wildlife population within the species home range.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On all landscapes that are suitable for the kinds of wildlife, within the range of the desired species or the natural community under consideration.

CRITERIA**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

The identification of the required management actions to achieve the

planned purpose, will be based on Hawaii Biology Technical Notes No. 4, 5, and 6 or other suitable wildlife habitat evaluation procedures. The evaluation procedure will be used to determine a upland habitat suitability for either individual fields, habitat areas, type or natural community as well as to provide an overall evaluation for the entire property or operating unit.

The following habitat elements will be considered when assessing upland wildlife habitat. Not all may apply to every habitat type.

- Food (type)
- Nesting Cover (types of plants, trees, forest, etc.)
- Escape Cover (types of plants, trees, forest, etc.)
- Island Occurrence (where found)
- Elevation Range (where found)
- Breeding Habits
- Threats (disease, habitat loss, other animal species, etc.)

If the habitat evaluation demonstrates existing upland habitat for target species, the habitat will be preserved, maintained, or improved in its present state of toward optimum conditions.

If the habitat evaluation demonstrates potential upland habitat for target species, the habitat will be improved and maintained to meet minimum acceptable or above conditions.

The habitat evaluation will identify which elements may be weak or missing. For the desired species, the types, amount, and distribution of upland habitat elements and the required management actions to achieve the planned purpose will be identified.

Acceptable management actions include: manage vegetation; install game bird watering facilities; manage plant pests; manage animal pests; graze to control vegetation; implement fire control measures; and mitigate the effects of outdoor lighting.

The use of plant materials will be appropriate to upland wildlife habitat of concern. Native plants will be used wherever possible.

The landowner or operator will obtain all necessary local, state, and federal permits that apply.

CONSIDERATIONS

Wildlife population control of alien animal species (hunting to reduce numbers) may be necessary to protect and maintain certain habitats.

Consider that manipulations of habitat may impact more than the desired kinds of wildlife. These possible effects shall be evaluated and taken into consideration during the planning process.

This practice may be used to promote the conservation of declining species, including threatened and endangered species.

Consider the problems of habitat fragmentation when using this practice. Create large blocks of habitat versus increased edge which leads to predation by some species.

Consider elevation in all habitat suitability assessments.

Consider habitat linkages and habitat corridors when developing upland wildlife habitat.

PRACTICE EFFECTS

Soil

Improved management of upland wildlife species will reduce runoff and erosion particularly when project includes management of alien animal species. Initial soil disturbance activities and removal of vegetative cover will leave the land susceptible to erosion until revegetation occurs. Use of heavy equipment when soils are saturated may compact soil and hinder establishment of trees.

Water

Improved management of species will enhance water quality of nearby water bodies. Any planting of natives species may temporarily cause water quality problems, but will benefit water quantity and quality in the long run.

Air

Initially, there may be a slight reduction in air quality from site disturbance activities. Smoke, when burning prescribed, or airborne sediment may reduce visibility and create a safety hazard. If pesticides are used for vegetation removal, there may also be an

increase in chemical drift from pesticide applications, depending upon the amount and kind used during site preparation. Exposed soil will be subject to wind erosion until desirable cover is established.

Plant

Establishment and growth of suitable woody vegetation will significantly improve with the removal of unwanted plants and debris that compete for space, sunlight, moisture and/or nutrients. Short term loss in productivity may occur if disturbance of soil has caused damage to existing desirable woody vegetation.

Animals

Improved management with elements that will provide food, shelter and cover to upland wildlife will give animal resource concerns significant improvement.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Site-specific specifications which document the requirements for installing, operating and maintaining the practice on a particular site to achieve its intended purpose(s) will be prepared in accordance with this standard and the practice specification.

The site-specific specifications shall be documented on the NRCS Hawaii Jobsheet for this practice and given to the client. Other documents such as worksheets, maps, drawings, and narrative statements in the conservation plan may be used to plan and design the practice and to prepare the site-specific specifications.

The planned purpose; target species; and the amount, kind, and location of the required management actions, will be identified.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The purpose of operation and maintenance is to insure that the practice functions as intended over time.

The effectiveness of the planned management actions will be evaluated after sufficient time has past for establishment and to gather reliable data. The evaluation of effectiveness will be based on how well the treated habitat meets the management objectives for the target wildlife species. Periodic evaluations will be conducted throughout the planning period.

Changes to the management actions will be made as necessary per each evaluation.

All structural and vegetative measures installed via this practice, will be maintained and repaired as necessary to ensure that they function as intended.